Perversion of Faith:

The Psychology of Racist Propaganda in Film and Speech

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In memory of those who have died as the result of
hate-inspired social violence

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Introduction

With political disinformation and hate speech rampant and with anti-semitism on the rise across the world, it is vital for a healthy society to better understand both racism and the propaganda that promotes it. This study highlights the role of the feature film in promoting an ideology that supports the identification of a racial enemy that can lead to political persecution and social violence. In what follows, a psychological model will be presented as an explanatory framework for understanding the emotional appeal of racist propaganda. Illustrative evidence for the psychological model will be provided primarily through three feature films and one speech of Hitler's made during the National Socialist (Nazi) regime in Germany (1933-1945). These examples provide evidence of different ways in which film and speech were utilized to aid in the regime's intent to wage war against its perceived racial enemies.

Beginning with World War I, propaganda has played an increasingly important role in the waging of war (Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992). As technology progressed, warfare increased in scope, and it became necessary to convince the ordinary citizens of states to support it, as warfare had become "total." Propaganda has served as a justification and an explanation for sending vast numbers of men and women into battle and for spending vast resources to wage war. At nearly the same time, the advances in the technology of mass communication in the 20th century brought unprecedented means of communicating political ideas first through radio and moving pictures, then through television, and eventually through the internet and social media (Schleuning, 2004). The propagandist is now able to deliver messages of racial conflict and hate to larger and larger audiences in shorter and shorter periods of time.

In this book I shall address five major questions related to the role of propaganda in the promotion of racist ideology and social violence:

1. How can we understand the emotional basis of the ideology of antisemitism?

2. How are these ideas translated into mass media like films, television, and the internet?

3. What is the emotional appeal of this propaganda to the committed follower and to the average citizen?

4. What is the role of propaganda in moving people from an ideology to social action including violence?

5. What might be antidotes to racist propaganda?

As the past century brought mass communication it also brought mass murder often involving race/religious/class conflict on a scale hardly ever seen in previous eras. The murder of six million European Jews between 1939 and 1945 by the totalitarian German state is something that is still hard to fully comprehend let alone explain even after 80 years. This attempt at the extermination of an entire group serves as the darkest example of genocide which has found its way into our time in such diverse areas of the world as Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Myanmar, and Cambodia to list only a few examples. Does propaganda work to motivate people for war? Is propaganda effective in promoting ethnic conflict and genocide? How and why does propaganda really work? When does it work best and with whom? The purpose of this book is to try to answer these additional questions as well by explaining the emotional appeal of propaganda with concepts from communication science, cognitive psychology, social psychology, and psychoanalysis.

In social psychology, propaganda is understood as a form of attitude change through social influence processes, and its approach has generally been to explain political persuasion mostly in cognitive terms. However, depth psychology has given us additional understanding of the ways in which social change and particularly social trauma cause disruptions in how we view ourselves as individuals and as members of social groups. This kind of disruption in our identities, individual and social, can cause deep emotional reactions in individuals because we share social change with others in groups to which we belong. Neg-

ative shared emotions like fear, threat, demoralization, humiliation, and depression but also positive ones like cohesion, unity, belonging, and community are shared and contribute to the formation of unconscious, impulse-laden fantasies on a communal basis.

When these unconscious fantasies are shared in a group, they may become building blocks for historical group fantasies or myths that play a role in the wider historical process. Propaganda may then be understood as operating on the level of both the thinking and feeling of individuals as well as on the level of large groups in a way that arouses certain emotions, quells others, exploits primitive group processes, and creates ideology and new group values and norms. In this way propaganda, by appealing to the irrational, instinctual passions rather than rational thought, serves to explain, justify, and incite political action in war and racial conflict.

I was trained primarily in psychoanalysis but before that in clinical psychology and before that in social psychology. My initial scholarly work involved the development and structure of small groups utilizing and integrating concepts from psychoanalysis and social psychology. This present work represents an effort to apply the integration of cognitive science, social psychology, and psychoanalysis to the study of large groups using racist propaganda film as the evidential focus[1].

Propaganda

Propaganda can be understood to be the pornography of the politician. More accurately, propaganda operates best in times of political change and social turmoil when the politician seeks to create group excitement, preserve, or enhance group cohesion, or to control group morale and anxiety to promote his/her political agenda. Propaganda and pornography are interesting to study in relation to each other because they both seek to arouse emotional passions through media.

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[1]   This approach is similar to that proposed by Chodorow (2020) and her advocacy for an independent American psychoanalytic theory combining psychoanalysis and sociology.

However, propaganda, like pornography, is one of those difficult words to define. One person's propaganda is another one's persuasive argument. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) offers several definitions. Propaganda is a Latin word that comes from the gerundive form, *propagandus –a –um* of the verb *propago, propagare,* to propagate. Propagate comes originally from the practice of grafting or transplanting but generalized to that which causes plants or animals to reproduce. The word propaganda first appears in the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith) founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV and comprised of cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. Its mission was to spread the message of the Church throughout the world but particularly to non-Catholic regions. It was the missionary arm of the Church and was a powerful and important body particularly in the era of European colonialism.

The dictionary's second definition involves the systematic scheme or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice, the reproduction of ideas. The third definition involves the systematic propagation of information or ideas by an interested party, especially in a tendentious way, to instill or encourage a particular attitude or response. This comes closer to current popular ideas about propaganda. In Western societies in general, and in the United States in particular, propaganda is associated with manipulation, distortion, and deception and has a decidedly pejorative connotation. This negative connotation led Pope John Paul II to change the name of the missionary *Congregatio* to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in 1982. This is the same organization with the same mission with a more sanitized name.

Propaganda is related to but differs from rhetoric in some important respects (Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992). Rhetoric was for the ancient Greeks one of the three original liberal arts along with dialectics and grammar. It is defined as the art of persuasion through language. Political propaganda adds to rhetoric the factor of a particular authority-group member relationship as well as an appeal to emotion over reason. In this sense propaganda is a form of advertising but within a

particular power relationship in which both authority and emotion are invoked in a political context.

The definition of political propaganda adopted in this study consists of the following:

> *Mass communication which has as its goal the arousal and exploitation of an audience's irrational, emotional response to authority and to its message in order to change or reinforce attitudes, values, and behaviors.*

Propaganda works most effectively in a mass context. Its hallmark, as opposed to other forms of persuasion, lies in the appeal to emotion over logic and reason.

While there are linguistic and rhetorical tricks and devices which characterize propaganda, these tricks can be seen to be in the service of emotional appeal as well as a product of a more primitive psychological state. Political propaganda is associated with swaying public opinion in small localities as well as on a global scale. It is related to but distinguished from rhetoric, persuasion and argumentation.

Modern political propaganda may have begun with the French Revolution and the pamphleteering which sought to win the hearts and minds of the common people whose opinions until then did not count for much in the political process (Brinton, 1938). As mentioned, World War I (1914-1918) saw the fullest use of the new technologies of mass communication in promoting the political agendas of both sides of this massive conflict. As we shall discuss later, the seeming success of Allied propaganda made a deep impression on a young Austrian corporal fighting for Germany. Adolf Hitler felt that Germany lost the war because it lost the propaganda battle at home. He began his post-war career as a propagandist and saw to it that political propaganda would become the centerpiece of his totalitarian regime and a key weapon in Germany's next war (Kershaw, 1998).

Social Science Understanding of Propaganda

Social scientists, too, were impressed with the power of propaganda in World War I. Harold D. Lasswell, one of the most influential political scientists of the 20th century, wrote *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927) [1938]. He put forth a definition of propaganda and sought to explain its effects in terms of personality. He listed four objectives of propaganda: 1) mobilize hatred against the enemy 2) preserve the support of allies 3) win over neutrals and 4) demoralize the enemy. Among other things he noted in this remarkable study was the need to demonize the leader of the enemy country by portraying him as evil incarnate as the Allies did with the German Kaiser. Lasswell went on to elaborate his study of propaganda into a more general model of communication which he applied to politics in general. He summarized this model with the following questions: Who says what to whom? In what channel (media)? And with what effect? While Lasswell was originally influenced by Freud's theory of personality, he moved eventually to a learning theory model and then to a communications model of persuasion. His work has had a major impact on communications theory in political science and much subsequent social science work on propaganda.

In 1936, Edward Filene, of Boston department store fame, founded the Institute for Propaganda Analysis which operated until 1942 (Lee and Lee, 1939). Filene was the son of German Jews who came to the United States in the middle of the 19th century. He was a social reformer and was determined to counter the flow of antisemitic propaganda, a fallout of right-wing propaganda rampant in the 1930's in the United States. The Institute published a number of books aimed at the general public dealing with recognizing and counteracting propaganda. The authors of several of these books, Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, were social scientists. They identified a number of techniques or "tricks" used by propagandists which are worth noting because they have become so influential in the understanding of propaganda. They described the following characteristics of propaganda gathered from the speeches of the antisemitic Catholic priest, Father Charles Coughlin

(Lee and Lee, 1939):

1. Glittering Generalities – assertions that are vague and general and thus cannot easily be refuted and have an air of credibility. Uses euphemisms that sounds better than unpleasant facts. Uses "virtue" words like security, peace, honor.

2. Transfer – the association of something bad or good with the idea being promoted.

3. Testimonial – backing by authorities or institutions which most people respect or believe for ideas.

4. Plain Folks – the appeal to the common man 'just like us.'

5. Bandwagon – everyone agrees so don't be left out especially when our side wins.

6. Fear – the exaggeration and appeal to threat and fears.

7. Name Calling – use of stereotypes and slogans to counter arguments of the other side. Hang a bad label on the other side

8. Card Stacking – use all possible arguments only in favor of one side including Outright Lies.

The social science literature on propaganda makes use of at least six related disciplines stemming from this early work: communications science, political science, sociology, social psychology, business management, and psychoanalysis.

The study of propaganda techniques has been very influential in the application of communications theory to understanding the effects of political propaganda.

Sociologists like the Lees used communications theory to enhance their social forces model for the general public.

Social psychologists have regarded propaganda as a form of attitude

change through social influence and have stressed the role of social forces on the ability to change attitudes and even behavior. In addition to social influence on individuals' attitudes, social psychology emphasizes the role of situational factors outside of the individual in producing attitude change as well as a subjective but *social* construction of experience. Social psychological studies of propaganda's mechanisms have been organized around the following schema:

THE INTENT OF THE PROPAGANDIST

THE SETTING OF THE PROPAGANDA

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF THE PROPAGANDA

THE EFFECT OF THE PROPAGANDA ON ATTITUDES AND
BEHAVIOR

This schema works equally well for the selling of soap as it does for the selling of a foreign policy initiative like going to war. This sequence is quite straight forward. The propagandist has the goal to change attitudes and behavior, has a method or process (campaign) to implement these goals, and may have a method to gauge the outcome of the program as a success or failure (public opinion polling).

Political science has highlighted public polling to assess public opinion and attitude changes in large settings. This has been especially important in measuring the effects of public policy as well as election campaigns. Research in business schools on advertising techniques, consumer behavior, and the like have contributed to the understanding of mass persuasion as well.

In the case of the feature films from the Nazi era in Germany which we will have the opportunity to analyze in depth, the intent of the propagandist was clear.

Propaganda was a top priority of the Nazi regime and its management called for a cabinet-level position occupied by Joseph Goebbels. The first film we will discuss, *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)*

was intended to build support for the Nazi program through furthering the personality cult around Adolf Hitler. The setting of the propaganda was the portrayal of a massive Nazi rally in 1934 which emphasized Hitler's powerful, charismatic style of leadership. The film was shown outside of Germany in order to demonstrate Germany's cohesion, resolve, and rebirth. The effect of the film cannot be measured precisely although the Nazis were interested in the polling of the regime's propaganda's effects. The regime used the SS Security Service *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) to gather reactions to various forms of propaganda throughout Germany. While these reports were not always to be trusted, the historical consensus was that personally Adolf Hitler became extremely popular in Germany and remained so until his death (Kershaw, 1987).

If we apply the same sequence of intent, setting emotional impact, and effect to the two antisemitic films we will discuss in depth, *Jud Süss (Süss the Jew)* and *Der ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew),* the same picture emerges. The intent of the propagandists can be seen as quite clear. The German totalitarian regime was determined to convince first the German population and later the populations of Nazi-occupied Europe that the Jews were a subhuman, alien, inferior race, and a pestilence that needed to be exterminated like disease-carrying animals. The intent of the propaganda was to incite hate against an enemy which was held to be responsible for all of the ills of Germany and indeed of the entire world (*Weltpest).*

At the outcome end of this sequence, we know what the outcome was as far as the Jews of Europe were concerned. Historians have estimated that between 59.4% and 62.2% of the Jewish population of Europe, almost six million people, were killed by the totalitarian German state and its allies between 1939 and 1945 (Dawidowicz, 1975). This war against the Jews was ideologically driven and ideologically justified. Even though the exact link between propaganda and murder cannot be causally measured, the conclusion that propaganda played an important role in creating a shared mentality and attitudinal conditions among the general German public that allowed participation in or acquiescence to

genocide will be explored in subsequent chapters.

The historian Daniel Goldhagen (1996) argued that the profusion of antisemitic "eliminationist" literature which flooded Germany between 1870 and 1939 played a causal role in the perpetration of the Holocaust. More than any other historian of the Holocaust, Goldhagen takes anti-semitic ideology to be the main causal factor in the extermination of the European Jews. This eliminationist propaganda served, in his view, as the evidential basis for the conclusion that Germans killed Jews because they were prepared to do so by a culturally accepted set of ideas, and that they carried through with this idea when world war gave them the opportunity. This is his explanation for the large numbers of Hit-ler's "willing executioners" in the vast bureaucracy of death responsible for the murder of six million Jews. Since historians need a motivational framework to explain the role of human nature in the historical pro-cess, Goldhagen adopted a model from cognitive social psychology. He describes this model in the following way:

> Cognitive models – beliefs, viewpoints, and values which may or may not be explicitly articulated – nevertheless serve to structure every society's conversation… When a conversa-tion is monolithic or close to monolithic on certain points – and this includes the unstated, underlying cognitive models – then a society's members automatically incorporate its features into the organization of their minds, into the fundamental axioms that they use (consciously or unconsciously) in perceiving, understanding, analyzing, and responding to all social phe-nomenon (Goldhagen, 1996, pp. 33-34).

Goldhagen discusses German antisemitism as just such a cognitive model, but specifies that the German axiomatic model was elimination-ist in character.

Other historians challenged Goldhagen's premise that antisemitic ide-ology was the sole causal explanation for the Holocaust (see especially

Browning, 2004).[2] The present work does not assume that Goldhagen is entirely correct in his view.

This study offers evidence that while antisemitic propaganda was ubiquitous in Germany for many decades, the Nazis antisemitic program changed over time to an increasingly radical position, and that this change was reflected in the content of the propaganda, especially in the two antisemitic films we shall explore in depth. However, the cognitive model offered by Goldhagen has merit but will be expanded to include the emotional elements in ideology and propaganda.

The cognitive model from social psychology rests heavily on the assumption of logical progression and rational choice. The model I shall present in this book adds the irrational, emotional, and visceral appeal of antisemitism and other forms of racism to the understanding of propaganda. By adding this emotional dimension, understanding the role of propaganda in the perpetration of genocide may be enhanced. The model with the most experience in plumbing the depths of the irrational in human nature is psychoanalysis. Recent applications of psychoanalysis to large group psychology and to social traumas have great relevance for the study of propaganda and its effects (Suistola and Volkan, 2017; Volkan, 2020).

Psychoanalysis and Propaganda

 Psychoanalysis is a theory of the mind, a method of investigation, and a treatment procedure for individuals that posits the interacting effects of endogenous emotional experiences, psychological development in childhood, and relations with the environment in the production of mental conflicts. While primarily focused on the individual mind, Freud was the first psychoanalyst to apply his understanding of mental forces in conflict to groups. Perhaps because of his personal experiences in World War I, which saw his three sons in the Austrian army,

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[2]   This controversy exemplified the intentionalist versus functionalist historical debate about the causes of the Holocaust which is beyond the scope of the present work.

he wrote a paper in 1915 called *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915a). Later, he wrote a longer treatise on large groups called *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). In these books he attempted to explain large group processes in terms of his emerging theory of the relationship of individuals to authority. We shall have reason to cite this work when an elaborated psychological theory of propaganda's effects is fully developed. Here I wish to point out Freud's life- long interest in the individual's relationship to the group and to authority.

With Freud's work as a background, several psychoanalysts contributed studies of propaganda in the context of World War II. Ernst Kris (1941, 1943, 1944, 1947) was involved in a wartime project understanding and counteracting German propaganda and published several contributions on the subject. He had fled the Nazis from his native Vienna and settled in New York.

In his paper on the danger of propaganda (1941), for example, he described the power of the slogan to arouse emotion. He also discussed anxiety, libidinal conflicts, and external danger as increasing one's suggestibility in the mass setting. Nazi propaganda, he asserted, had the aim of driving people into crowd formations so that suggestion was made more powerful.

Money-Kyrle (1941), an English psychoanalyst, discussed German and English propaganda in World War I and compared both to Nazi propaganda. He concluded that the Nazi audience was prone to influence from parent figures which were internalized. To be effective, he concluded, propaganda must correspond to or symbolize unconscious fantasy solutions to emotional conflict.

Glover (1947), also an English psychoanalyst, in his study of war observed that the success of propaganda depends on the comprehension of preconscious and unconscious aspects of human nature to hurt the morale of the enemy but also to enhance one's own group solidarity.

Simmel (1946) saw anti-Semitism as a form of mass psychopathology, a shared delusion or mass psychosis in the case of Nazi Germany. Propa-

ganda was thus a means of enhancing this delusion, a substitute for the leader's live, spoken words. His analysis rested on the assumption of a devouring instinct in mankind manifesting itself in normal and pathological groups.

Adorno, Lowenthal, and Massing (1946) studied antisemitic Nazi propaganda as part of a larger study of antisemitism during and after World War II. They found that propaganda won people over by playing on their unconscious conflicts rather than by logic. The propaganda was personalized and non-objective, substituted means for ends, and constituted an irrational wish fulfillment. They described propaganda as involving an emotional regression to a ritualistic form of communication by which emotions are sanctioned by an agency of social control, an externalized conscience. Its purpose was to weaken the self-contained individual by 1) creating a dichotomy of friend and enemy and 2) by the promotion of an indefatigable lone wolf, innocently persecuted leader of the common people. The religious language and form of propaganda lends the impression of sanctioned ritual to the audience as a cult is created. The cult is based on the premise that might makes right and what is established is right. Finally, the performance of a ritual sacrifice is needed to solidify the group. In Nazi Germany, the enemy chosen was the Jews, and genocide became the ritual sacrifice needed to purify the 'Aryan race.'

In recent years, a renewed psychoanalytic interest in large group psychology has been led by the Turkish-Cypriot-American psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan. In a series of books, (Volkan, 1988, 1997, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2020) has evolved a theory of large group psychology integrating psychoanalytic insights from the study of trauma and identity formation to problems of leader-follower relationships and ethnic conflict. As we will explore later, he has applied these notions to multidisciplinary consultations in ethnic conflicts in various parts of the world. He has addressed the importance of propaganda in many of these ethnic conflicts including the Nazi era (Volkan 2015; Volkan, Ast, and Greer, 2002; Suistola and Volkan, 2017). Volkan listed 9 elements to a stereotyped pattern which he thought contributed to malignant propaganda

(Suistola and Volkan, 2017):

1. A shared sense of victimization

2. The reactivation of a Chosen Trauma

3. Time collapse

4. Dehumanizing an opposing group

5. The Leader as savior

6. Valuing group identity over individual identity and undermining family,

7. We-ness founded on entitlement ideology and Chosen Trauma

8. A preoccupation with borders

9. Turning entitlement into revenge

The present work seeks to build upon these previous studies in order to consider the irrational and the emotional in propaganda's effectiveness.

Its purpose of is to add an integrated psychoanalytic approach to understanding the emotional appeal and behavioral effect of political propaganda to the work in communication science, sociology, and social psychology. Psychoanalysis has gained a greater appreciation of the role of social forces in human motivation and behavior primarily through the study of massive social trauma like the Holocaust (Krystal, 1968). In addition, studies of identity, narcissism, and shared unconscious fantasies have provided new conceptual tools which can be applied to understanding the relationship between the individual and the large group.

Hitler's Theory of Propaganda

Adolf Hitler had his own theories about propaganda and made the control and dissemination of information a cornerstone of his rise to power and the consolidation of his regime. He devoted chapters VI and XI of *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)* (1925) to propaganda in war and organization respectively. He wrote:

> [Propaganda's] effect must be aimed at the emotions and only to a limited degree to the so-called intellect …The art of propaganda lies in understanding the emotional ideas of the great masses and finding through a psychologically correct form, the way to the attention and thence to the heart of the broad masses (p.180).

It was Hitler who coined the term the term "the big lie" in *Mein Kampf* (1925) as a lie so big that no one would believe that anyone possessed the audacity to tell it. Hitler attributed the use of "the big lie" to 'the Jews' who, according to Hitler, used it to blame German Army officer Erich Ludendorff for Germany's defeat in World War I. He goes on to endorse the use of "the big lie" as a valuable propaganda technique. We shall have reason to show how Hitler used this technique in his own propaganda speeches.

After being wounded in the war and discharged from active duty, Hitler continued in a new part of the army, an information department, whose mission was to act covertly to mold public opinion. Thus, he became a propagandist and continued to be one until his death (Kershaw, 1998). As leader of the German government, he established a cabinet-level department, the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda under Joseph Goebbels. However, the propaganda apparatus of the Nazi regime extended far beyond the Ministry of Propaganda into all areas of German life from 1933 to 1945 resulting in a far-reaching control of all media disseminating information. This included film, radio, pamphlets, billboards, posters, newspapers, magazines, and books. The state and Nazi party controlled it all (Rentschler, 1996). For example, Otto Dietrich, the Reich Press Chief met every morning with

Hitler and developed "Führer material" which was released to 3,000 German newspapers and 5,000 periodicals each day. More than 75,000 of these secret propaganda messages known as "Word of the Day" were delivered from 1938 to 1945 (Herf, 2006).

The strategy of the Nazi regime was to repeat the propaganda messages as often as possible and in as many different ways as possible. Hitler felt that propaganda had to be concise, repetitive, easy to understand, and appealing. One other feature that seems to have been important was the idea that propaganda should lead to action, and that action could be a form of propaganda as well. In the early days of the Nazi party, after propaganda speeches, many given by Hitler himself, objections or alternate views were met with violence, not further debate. Propaganda views were reinforced with violence or the threat of violence. Thus, propaganda was to be one-sided with the other side's view completely quashed (Kershaw, 1998).

I have chosen to focus on the racist feature film as a vehicle for propaganda because it seems to illustrate so richly the psychological model that is proposed for propaganda's emotional appeal. This model does begin with Hitler's assumption that propaganda appeals to emotion and is inherently irrational in its message. Hence, the need for a psychological model that accounts for emotion and irrationality.

Hitler, it turns out, had a direct hand in all three of the Nazi films to be discussed. He personally commissioned Leni Riefenstahl to make *Triumph of the Will* and collaborated with her in reviewing the finished product. It was Hitler's idea to make antisemitic films after the *Reichskristallnacht* pogrom because he felt that the German public was not responding sufficiently against the Jews. He personally commissioned Goebbels to make *Jud Süss (The Jew Süss)* and *Der ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)* and oversaw the production of both films. With the *Eternal Jew*, Hitler repeatedly made suggestions for revisions which delayed the completion of the film.

Race, Racism and Antisemitism

Historians have concluded that racial antisemitism was the ideological lynchpin of the Nazi regime and became even more important in the war beginning with the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 (Browning, 2004; Confino, 2014; Dawidowicz, 1975; Friedlander, 1997, 2007; Goldhagen, 1995; Herf, 2006; Kershaw, 2008; Longerich, 2010). There is controversy, however, about whether the antisemitic ideology that entered German politics and German culture beginning in the medieval era was a straight line to the Holocaust or whether the Nazis brought something new to the already existing antisemitism in the culture in order to bring about mass murder on such a scale. This controversy will not be addressed directly. However, the technological advantages of the feature film will be discussed as a potent new aspect of enhancing propaganda. Another modern feature of the Nazi racist propaganda was the employment of a pseudo-scientific notion of race and its importance in the nation state. This 'scientific' racism combined with the already existent religious antisemitism enhanced the racial aspect of the envisioned Nazi state (Confino, 2014).

Racism is also one of those words that is not easy to define because it manifests in different ways and in different contexts. In this study, racism is used to describe a set of attitudes, and beliefs as well as behaviors and actions that convey a hostility toward a group of people based on an erroneously conceived biological basis of 'race.' These beliefs can be shared with others in the form of an ideology justifying collective action ranging from persecutory discrimination to genocide. Racism can take systemic and institutional form when the ideology is widely shared on a large group basis and can be built into the very fabric of a group (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Dalal, 2002; Holmes Commission, 2023).

Racism is based on the notion of race. It is important to note that there is no current scientific evidence from biology, genetics, or physical anthropology for the material existence of distinct human 'races,' or that such groupings can be arrayed on a continuum of inferiority/superiority (Brace, 2005; Dalal, 2002). 'Race' is now conceived of as a social

construct which can be understood to serve purposes that are social, cultural, political, and historical in nature.

The word race was first introduced into English in about 1580, and it derives from the French word *rasse* (OED, 1959) meaning 'breed.' The introduction of the word into English closely followed the colonial expeditions of the British into Africa, the first of which began in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1553 and eventually into the Americas. The 'scientific' study of race began in earnest in the 19th century and eventuated in the eugenics movement in the United States and Europe. The belief in the concept of 'race' and the pseudo-scientific efforts to find evidence for it, has been used to justify a wide variety of social actions including enslavement, colonialism, segregation, lynching, discrimination, euthanasia, and genocide. Even though the concept of race as a biological fact has been discredited, it persists into our own time.

The etymologic history of the term antisemitism is an interesting one (Falk, 2008). The word "Semitic' was first used by the German academic August von Schlözer in 1781 to designate a group of people who spoke languages like Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. Credit for coining of the term 'antisemitism' is usually given to the German journalist Wilhelm Marr who used the term in an 1879 pamphlet outlining how Jews posed a grave threat to German culture. From this time, antisemitism has come to mean antipathy to Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism and is synonymous with Jew-hatred. Antisemitism is a confusing term because it has nothing to do with those who speak Semitic languages, only Jews. For that that reason, I use the spelling 'antisemitism' rather than capitalizing 'Semitism' because 'Semites' do not exist in material reality.

Scholars have called attention to the fact that there are different forms of antisemitism that coincide with eras and historical circumstances. For example, Flannery (1985) referred to economic, political, religious, nationalistic, and racial forms of antisemitism and gave examples which spanned many centuries and historical circumstances. Harap (1987) described antisemitism as having religious, economic, social, racial, ideological, and cultural dimensions. Friedländer (2007) coined the term

'redemptive antisemitism' in his study of Nazi ideology. He saw the Nazi ideology as a form of racial antisemitism with the addition of the idea that expulsion or annihilation of Jews would lead to redemption of the non-Jewish world in an almost religious sense. The Nazi ideology posited the Jews as the personification of everything that was evil, corrupt, and degenerate. Getting rid of such evil could only lead to a utopian world of peace, prosperity, and goodness. This study will make use of some of these distinctions in the analysis of the Nazi propaganda films and will show how the Nazi propagandists made use of all of these dimensions of antisemitism while organizing their ideology mainly around 'race' and redemption as Friedländer (1997) observed.

Nazi antisemitism was a distinct form of racism. I refer to both antisemitism and racism for the specific and general characteristics that each term may convey. There are different kinds of racism, and I do not wish to imply that they derive from the same sources or contexts. The focus of this study is Nazi racial antisemitic propaganda, and it is hoped that this may contribute to a greater understanding of racism in general.

It is not possible to review the vast literature on antisemitism, racism, and prejudice either from a social science or psychoanalytic perspective. The psychological model I shall offer is an attempted integration of concepts from social science and psychoanalysis for propaganda in general. As background, the interested reader is referred to the following which have influenced this current study. The history of antisemitism is summarized in three volumes by Leon Poliakov (1961). Avner Falk (2006) has written a history of antisemitism with a psychoanalytic perspective. He has included reviews of psychoanalytic work on antisemitism and psychoanalytic work on Nazism. The social psychological perspective on prejudice is best exemplified by Gordon Allport's (1959) *The Nature of Prejudice* which has held up rather well over time. Duckitt's (1992a, b) review of the literature on prejudice revealed a trend away from seeing prejudice as exclusively an individual attitude and more toward the inclusion of group values and conformity and still later toward the notion that prejudice plays a crucial role in group cohesion. Duckitt concludes his review with a summary indicating that

prejudice can be generated by 1) universal psychological processes, 2) large group dynamics, 3) transmission and spread throughout the large group, and 4) individual differences with regard to the susceptibility of the individual to the group. The psychological model I shall propose follows in general ways these factors outlined by Duckitt.

Psychoanalysis and Antisemitism

The psychoanalytic study of antisemitism was begun by Freud. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) he described several factors in the etiology of antisemitism rooted in the unresolved psychological experiences of early childhood. The psychoanalytic literature on antisemitism has been reviewed by Bohleber (2010), Falk (2008), Ostow (1996), White (2023), and Young-Bruehl (1996). As with the social science literature, the psychoanalytic perspective on antisemitism has moved from the study of individual prejudicial attitudes to consider large group dynamics as well. This approach is best seen in the work of Volkan as cited above who has proposed a psychoanalytic large group psychology with applications to racism and antisemitism (See Volkan, 2015; Volkan, Ast, and Greer, 2002). This work builds on both previous individual and large group studies in the hope of expanding the understanding of how racist propaganda works as well as its role in social violence.

Extreme examples often offer the best avenue to understanding the workings of a particular phenomenon in human nature. The German totalitarian regime (1933-1945) offers an extreme example of the use of propaganda in waging a two-front war, the war against the Allies and the war against the Jews (Dawidowicz, 1975). The genocidal war against the Jews is still not well understood because of its irrationality and its scale, but historians have agreed that ideology and propaganda played some important part in this war. In Hitler's declaration which he wrote before his suicide, he cited the war against the Jews as his greatest legacy. The Germans were killing Jews well past the time that it was clear that the war was lost and up to the very last moments of the war (Goldhagen, 1996). I have chosen the medium of the feature motion pic-

ture to serve as the evidential basis for my conceptualization of propaganda's appeal. The Nazis exploited this new medium in ways never achieved before, although they also made use of many other media as well – speeches, pamphlets, books, radio, mass rallies, and exhibitions. Films offer manageable illustrations of the larger antisemitic campaign and illustrate in some unique ways the power of film to sway attitudes.

Plan of the Book

The book is organized in the following way. Chapter 1 offers a psychological model for the emotional appeal of propaganda. This model builds on the communications science and social psychological models briefly reviewed above and offers an additional viewpoint. The emotional appeal of racist propaganda and ideology can be best understood in terms of the creation and promotion of myths about in-groups and outgroups that are shared on a communal basis. These myths, in turn, can be further explained by the application of psychoanalytic concepts like identity, shared unconscious fantasy, and illusion. Racism, in particular, lends itself in particular to this kind of in-depth theorizing because 'race' does not exist in material reality.

Because propaganda is a social phenomenon, however, it cannot be fully explained in terms of individual psychology. In Chapter 2 an interactional framework is proposed, supplementing the individual psychological approach. The psychology of the propagandist-audience relationship is explored as an example of the leader-follower relationship that is seen to play such a crucial role in mass movements like the Nazi regime. Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)* (1935), a documentary of the 1934 Nazi Nuremburg rally called Days of Unity, is offered as an example of the power of the feature film in establishing the relationship between the propagandist and her audience. The film promotes a myth of Hitler as a messiah god who could unite Germany, redeem its national honor lost in World War I, and create a utopian, eternal nation. The film documents the power of this charismatic leader-faithful follower relationship as well.

To further illustrate this relationship, Hitler's 'Prophecy' Speech (1939) in which he prophesied the extermination of European Jewry is examined in Chapter 3 from an interactionist perspective. As will be discussed later in Chapter 5, the 'prophecy' speech appeared prominently in the feature film *Der ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)* (1941).

The proposed psychological model posits the need for the identification of an enemy which can be understood as both a social and psychological need serving a variety of purposes. In Chapter 4, the identification of Jewry as an existential threat to Germany is examined in the racial terms that the Nazis proposed in their propaganda. The feature film *Jud Süss (Süss the Jew)* (1940) is discussed to illustrate the racialization of difference and the sexualization of 'race.' The enemy is racialized and sexualized in the film and in the process seen as fit for destruction. This was the most commercially successful antisemitic film ever made and was set as a historical drama. Its quasi-historical portrayal of a Jewish conspiracy to ruin a German principality morally and economically and led by an unscrupulous and rapacious Jew, ends with the Jew's hanging and his fellow Jews expelled. The propaganda intent was submerged in an appealing drama but conveying an exterminationist message none the less. This film is compared briefly to the American film, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) because both films were racist in intent, and both employed sexualization of 'race' as its most emotionally appealing feature.

Chapter 5 shows a more unpalatable approach to the dehumanization of the enemy with the message that the enemy is so dangerous and corrupt that it is unworthy of life. *Der ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)* (1941) is a stark and disturbing example of how the feature film was used to dehumanize the Jewish people. In this film the most emotionally arousing scenes involved comparing Jews to hordes of brown rats and showing the alleged brutality of Jewish ritual animal slaughter. The film ends, as mentioned, with Hitler's exterminationist 'prophecy' speech. In contrast to *Jud Süss,* this film was not commercially successful, deemed not suitable for women and children, and was eventually shown mostly to hardened Nazi men to reinforce their antisemitic ideology.

Chapter 6 takes up the issue of the role of racist film propaganda in social violence using the Nazi genocide of the European Jews as the illustrative case. This linkage is controversial because of the problem of evidence showing a direct cause and effect relationship. In this chapter several suggestive approaches are argued. Changing the normative values of a society so that mass murder of an identified and dehumanized enemy can be both imagined and incrementally enacted seems to be the contribution of these films to the Holocaust. The mechanisms involved in seeing a racist feature film and subsequent social violence is explored utilizing what has been conceptualized about large group psychology in this regard.

Chapter 7, the last, takes up the difficult issue of recognizing and combatting racist propaganda in our own time. The identification and dehumanizing of the enemy are recognizable in our own leaders in times of stress and real and perceived threat. The technology of the internet and social media means that the dissemination of disinformation, propaganda, and conspiracies can be made widespread and almost instantaneous. Utilizing our understanding of the past is one hope for combatting the pernicious effects of racist propaganda in the present. Some recommendations for recognizing and dealing with propaganda will be offered.

Chapter 1

An Integrated Model of Propaganda: Manipulation of Emotion

Propaganda's purpose is to disseminate ideas intended to change and reinforce thinking, beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavior. This chapter describes ideas related to better understanding the way in which the manipulation of emotion and irrationality plays a role in propaganda's appeal and effectiveness. As noted earlier, previous studies of the psychology of propaganda have stressed its cognitive and communicative components. This chapter will address four elements of the depth psychology of propaganda. First, a general model will be presented which emphasizes the mobilization of fear and proposed solutions to it. Next, the relationship between ideology, myth, and shared group fantasies will be discussed as the second component to propaganda's appeal. Third, propaganda will be compared to pornography in that both share some surprising similarities in their dynamics. Lastly, the propagandist-audience relationship will be explored because propaganda's effects depend largely on its reception by its audience.

A Psychological Model

Being the subject of political propaganda can be likened to participating in an elaborate daydream. The propaganda message is often emotional and wish-fulfilling. It can incite certain emotions, quell others, and address and relieve value judgements likely to get in the way of the message. As such, it can be thought of as scripted along the lines of daydreams, sometimes even the kind of personal myths and night dreams that are the domain of the clinical psychoanalyst. However, unlike a daydream political propaganda has been authored not by members of an audience but rather by a skillful, determined manipulator whose motivation is to advance particular political ideas that may even include the necessity of committing social violence or going to war.

Propaganda comes in many varied forms. It may be broadcast as rumor or gossip or jokes, cast in a slogan, portrayed on a poster or billboard, enacted in a mass rally or street theater, displayed in pamphlets, books, cartoons, newspapers, radio, television, the internet, social media, and in motion pictures. Propaganda is not ordinary conversation or rhetoric in the form of rational logical thought and argument. Propaganda often comes in the form of verbal hyperbole and/or vivid pictorial or even auditory forms which condense a complex situation into something simple and compelling. Slogans like 'Remember Pearl Harbor,' 'Unity through Purity,' or 'Jewish Blood Must Flow' condense a complexity of ideas and emotions into a few short words which have nonetheless implications for future actions. The slogans can be seen to contain complex images of attack, death, mourning, revenge, group cohesion, and identification of enemies and which condense complicated matters of life and death and foreign and domestic policy.

The following represents a new integration of a psychological model outlining components which are posited as contributing to propaganda's appeal:

1. THREAT – From inside or outside, past, present, or future

2. REGRESSION – Cognitive and emotional

3. SOCIAL INFLUENCE – By the group, authority, or mass

4. STEREOTYPED SCRIPT – Ideology and illusion

5. DESIRED OUTCOME – The proffered solutions

These five factors can be seen to be interrelated. It is proposed that in groups, as in individuals, threat can lead to regression in thinking and feelings, rendering the group more prone to social influence. The stereotyped script involves the content, technique, and form of the propaganda message itself. The script is not just a convincing logical argument but rather owing to the regression, is highly emotional and irrational in many aspects. Owing to social influence, these emotions

may be shared communally through the common threat or through the mechanism of contagion in groups of all sizes including nations. These four factors working together is what constitutes propaganda's appeal and may lead to the propagandist's desired outcome. The propagandist portrays the problem in the form of threat to the group and then proposes the solution to the threat in the form of the political agenda.

This conceptual scheme is based on the idea of social equilibrium, a working balance among the interdependent parts of the group (Brinton, 1938; Davis and Newstrom, 1985; Hartman and Gibbard, 1974a). Groups, like individuals, can be seen to experience periods of shared distress due to a variety of causes which in turn lead to adaptations that seek to restore the group to a new state of equilibrium. The historian Crane Brinton (1938) in his study of revolutions, for example, compared the disequilibrium state of a country leading up to revolution to a bodily fever which may subside if the illness runs its course or if there is medical intervention. If something is wrong in one part of the system, its effects are felt throughout the rest of the system. Groups have better and worse ways of dealing with disequilibrium. Propaganda can be understood as one of those societal mechanisms that can either stoke a societal fever or seek to quell it and even both at the same time. Generally, propaganda, particularly in its more malignant forms, is less adaptive and more irrational as we shall demonstrate in subsequent chapters.

Threat

In this analysis, the word threat is used to designate a state of impending, actual, or imagined social disequilibrium. It is meant to encompass the individual subjective experience of unpleasant emotions like alienation, anxiety, depression, demoralization, vulnerability, humiliation, shame, guilt, persecution, attack, terror, dislocation, insecurity helplessness, hopelessness, and many other variations. These are all emotions experienced by individuals but may be shared communally through common threat or by contagion in groups of all sizes (Le Bon, 1895).